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Forest  
Service

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Southwest  
Region

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June 2014

# Final Environmental Impact Statement

## DRAFT Record of Decision

### Sugarloaf Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project

### Feather River Ranger District, Plumas National Forest, Plumas and Sierra Counties, California



Rabbit Creek



Rabbit Creek lies between 4,200 to 5,200 feet in elevation in the north eastern portion of the Sugarloaf Project area. Photograph taken by Susan Cueva, USDA Hydrologist

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# **Plumas National Forest Sugarloaf Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project**

## **DRAFT Record of Decision**

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## Introduction

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This Record of Decision (ROD) documents Plumas National Forest's, Forest Supervisor, Earl W. Ford's decision, along with the rationale for his selection of the course of action to be implemented for the Sugarloaf Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project. The Sugarloaf Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was issued June 2014, concurrent with this draft ROD. The FEIS provides a comprehensive disclosure of the environmental consequences linked to no-action and the three action alternatives considered in detail, designed within the framework of land management direction in the Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (PNF LRMP) (USDA 1988) as amended by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Final Supplemental EIS (SNFPA FSEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) (USDA 2004). The FEIS and draft ROD are available online at: <http://1.usa.gov/1jnfVj6>. Upon request, copies can be obtained at the Feather River District Office, 875 Mitchell Avenue, Oroville, California 95965, or by contacting Carol Spinos at 530-532-8932.

The Sugarloaf Project is located south of Little Grass Valley Reservoir, from Goat Mountain in the north to community of American House in the south, surrounding the community of La Porte, California. The project area encompasses all or portions of T. 21 N., R. 8 E., sec. 24-26; T. 21 N., R. 9 E., sec. 2, 3, 5-10, 14-22, 27-32, MDM. Approximately 93 percent of the project area lies within the wildland urban interface (WUI) between 4,000 to 5,800 feet elevation above mean sea level in Plumas and Sierra Counties.

## Purpose and Need

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The Sugarloaf Project was developed as a step toward incrementally restoring degraded watershed and forest ecosystems vulnerable to wildfire and to achieve desired ecologically healthy forests on National Forest System (NFS) lands, resilient to disturbances with proper hydrologic function. The following key project design features were developed in response to the underlying needs for taking this action at this time (the entire Purpose and Need is described in Section 1.4 of Chapter 1 of the FEIS):

The Sugarloaf Project responds to the need for reducing excessive, highly flammable (fallen woody debris) fuel accumulations (surface fuels) and high tree densities (ladder and crown fuels) to decrease risks to people, structures, and natural resources from wildfire. Fire suppression effectively decreased the incidence of historically frequent low intensity fires, allowing for a build-up of vegetative fuels over the last 100 years with corresponding continuous fuels patterns of intertwined tree crowns and branches, evident across the landscape today.

The Sugarloaf Project responds to the need for reducing road densities and related non-point source pollution and correcting ineffective drainage infrastructure, while thinning overcrowded riparian vegetation near streams to restore hydrologic function and riparian habitats. Since the early 1900s, large scale hydraulic mining on private lands, along with logging and road building across the landscape have acted to increase hillside soil erosion and in-stream sedimentation levels. In particular, historic operations in the Rabbit Creek watershed around La Porte (subwatersheds 5, 6, and 8) and in the area of Secret Diggings (subwatershed 15), removed forest vegetation and washed away topsoil to recover commercially valuable mineral resources. These

historic operations, coupled with the development of the extensive transportation system developed to expedite operations, timber harvest and residential development, with road densities reaching as high as 9.59 miles per square mile, have cumulatively impacted water quality, re-aligned stream courses and altered drainage flows and aquatic habitats.

The Sugarloaf Project responds to the need for establishing and preserving healthy mid- to late-seral forests capable of providing quality wildlife habitats, while preserving unique botanical and scenic features that were developed and sustained under the influence of fire in the Valley Creek Special Interest Area (SIA) and spatially overlapping Protection Activity Centers (PACs); key habitats for wildlife such as the California spotted owl and Northern goshawk. Currently, relative stand densities in CWHR size classes 3 and 4 are 65 and 74 percent respectively, beyond the 60 percent threshold whereby competition-related tree mortality increases; referred to as the “zone of imminent mortality.” The modeling of forest stand development (Dixon 2002) indicates over time, tree diameter growth and rise in tree populations (due to ingrowth) will act to promote forest stand densities well above the zone of imminent mortality. The Sugarloaf Project targets reducing tree populations, before densities slow growth and lower tree resistance to insect infestations, disease, drought conditions, wildfire-related root heating and scorching with associated higher tree mortality.

The Sugarloaf Project responds to the need for contributing toward local forestry-related employment along with providing forest products offerings, uniquely designed to retain aesthetically pleasing landscape features, biodiversity and clean water supporting tourism related income (FEIS, sections 2.1.2.1, 2.1.4., and 2.1.5). La Porte is a key stopping place for supplies, food and lodging. Camping, fishing, boating, hiking, mountain bike and OHV trails, scenic auto tours, hunting, snowmobiling, and cross country skiing trails are all amenities supporting \$130,000–\$160,000 in recreation fee revenue annually. Further contributions to the Plumas National Forest budget, town of La Porte and Plumas County include the revenues and taxes paid by outfitter guides that have special use authorizations to operate fishing and hunting guide services at Little Grass Valley Reservoir to the north and in the general forest surrounding the lake and La Porte. Ninety five percent of the fees collected contribute to managing and improving these facilities and contribute to Plumas County’s tax revenue (FEIS, section 3.10).

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## Decision

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I have decided to select Alternative D, designed in compliance with the 1988 Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (PNF LRMP) (USDA 1988) as amended by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) FSEIS and ROD (USDA 2004a, 2004b). I considered opposing views, extent of design criteria, resource protection mitigation measures, predicted effects on natural and cultural resources, a full range of alternatives, lack of information and scientific uncertainty, as well as new information brought forward in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the associated planning record.

Alternative D is described in detail in Section 2.1.7 of the June 2014, Sugarloaf Hazardous Fuels Reduction FEIS, including figures and vegetation, fuels and road improvement treatment maps. In addition to Appendices A-1 – A-10 to the FEIS, supplemental resource specialist reports



in the planning record provide explicit support data, descriptions of analysis methodology and assumptions, along with detailed prescription guidelines.

My selection of Alternative D authorizes hazardous fuels reduction treatments, forest health watershed restoration road improvements and re-introduction of restoration prescribed fire in the Valley Creek Special Interest Area (SIA) and strategically around the communities of the La Porte and American House as follows:

- Obliteration of 8.8 miles of non-system (unclassified) roads outside the Valley Creek Special Interest Area (SIA);
- Obliteration of 1.0 mile of non-system (unclassified) road within the Valley Creek SIA;
- Decommissioning of 0.7 mile of NFS (classified) road;
- Redesigning and upgrading road drainage features along priority National Forest System (NFS) roads PC511A, 22N53, 21N18A and 21N42Y such as out-sloping road segments, installing armored rolling dips and replacing culverts.
- 76 acres of thin from below (TFB) and 859 acres of mechanical variable density (radial) thinning (VDT) and Thinning from below (TFB) on south facing slopes in the wildland urban interface (WUI) defense zone and along ridgetops and upper slopes will allow for removal of trees up to 30 inch diameter at breast height (dbh), while retaining a minimum 40 percent canopy cover. Forest gaps up to a 1/4 acre will be established. Outside the WUI, variable density thinning (VDT) will be applied on north aspects allowing for removal of trees up to 24 inches dbh and retaining canopy cover between 40–50 percent. The lower slopes and riparian conservation areas (RCAs) will retain 50–60 percent canopy, limiting tree removal to 20 inches dbh.
- 3.6 miles of NFS road reconstruction, 2 miles of temporary road construction and 24 new landings.
- 1,401 acres of hand thin, pile, and pile burn trees less than 10.0 inches dbh (limited 5.9 dbh in PACs) to reduce tree density and ladder and surface fuels. Manual (hand cutting), hand-piling and burning of small trees and shrubs will be limited to within 250 feet either side of main road access routes; retaining a minimum of 50 percent canopy cover within the Valley Creek Special Interest Area (SIA).
- 71 acres of grapple pile and burn to reduce tree density and ladder and surface fuels.
- 278 acres of masticating brush and trees less than 10 inches dbh to reduce tree density and ladder fuels. Remaining conifers and brush will have an 18–25 foot spacing and hardwoods will be retained except where removal is necessary to facilitate operations.
- 3,598 acres low to moderate intensity prescribed underburn to reduce ladder and surface fuels.

Selected Alternative D will apply progressive approaches focused on the management of ecosystem structure and processes, rather than on specific species or their habitats (Safford et al. 2012), incorporating concepts from PSW-GTR-220, *An Ecosystem Strategy for Mixed Conifer Forests* (North et al. 2009), and PSW-GTR-237, *Managing Sierra Nevada Forests* (North et al. 2012). My decision adopts this focus, by concentrating on maintaining and restoring three important ecosystem attributes (as described in Franklin and Fites-Kaufmann 1996):

- *Composition* – the organisms that are present and their relative proportions;
- *Function* – the work carried out by ecosystems; and
- *Structure* – the numbers, sizes, and kinds of ecosystem “pieces” and their spatial arrangement.

My decision does not require skidding or removal of biomass to landings under timber sale contract procedures, as the economic analysis indicates present local demand is lacking and

processing infrastructure is located over thirty-five miles away from the Sugarloaf Project making hauling costs prohibitive (FEIS, section 3.10.4). I approve other fuels treatment methods including mastication (chipping/shredding and crushing), grapple pile and burn, hand-cut, hand-pile and burn and/or prescribed burning to achieve desired conditions. The implementation of these alternative fuels treatment methods and/or removal may be administered for individual or combination of operational phases under stewardship and/or service contracts (FEIS, section 2.1.7.).

I recognize there may be short term disturbances to the human environment from the use of machinery and emissions, presence of field crews and associated increased traffic and noise, and short term, localized impacts to air quality and visibility from smoke, when prescribed burning is underway (FEIS, sections 3.12, 3.14 and 3.16.1). In order to minimize these effects, my decision will apply mitigations during operations, including timber harvesting, road and log landing construction, road decommissioning and out-sloping of road surfaces to improve water drainage, installing drainage structures and prescribed burning (the complete compliment of mitigations are described in Appendix A-6 to the FEIS).

My decision also includes implementation monitoring of land management treatments to ensure they are conducted safely and responsibly as authorized, and in compliance with forest, regional and national standards. My decision includes monitoring of the following resources: water, soils, heritage, aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, noxious weeds and safety. Implementation monitoring would be primarily conducted during contract administration. I believe monitoring is fundamental to adaptive management and making informed decisions to better future conditions (FEIS, Appendix A-6).

*Permits, licenses and authorizations needed to implement the decision.*

In accordance with 40 CFR 1502.25 (b), the Environmental Impact Statement is to list all Federal permits, licenses, or other entitlements that must be obtained in implementing of Selected Alternative D. Sorting and removing Forest by-products from the site to commercial off-Forest vendors may involve some form of permits for road use of private lands for landings and access. Prescribed burning will require a burn permit from the local Air Quality Management District (AQMD) on all prescribed burns greater than 10 acres (FEIS, section 1.10).

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## Rationale for My Decision

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**Alternative D** fulfills the purpose of the Sugarloaf Project, while satisfying the needs for reducing hazardous fuels, promoting forest health, improving watershed health and contributing to local economic stability. Residents living in La Porte, American House and surrounding areas rely on the Forest Service for effective wildfire suppression and active management of public lands for clean water, biodiversity beneficial amenities and uses supporting recreation, tourism, quality of life, home heating (firewood), jobs and wood products. My decision will promote localized water quality for wildlife and beneficial uses targeting near stream non-point pollution, while reducing risk of long lasting disturbances to sensitive watersheds from wildfire. Outside WUI defense zones (more than a 1/4 mile from La Porte, American House and surrounding communities), integrated fuels reduction and forest health prescriptions align with public advice supported by best science

from General Technical Reports (GTR): Pacific Southwest (PSW) Research Station; PSW-GTR-220 and PSW-GTR-237 (March 2009 and 2012 respectively), including placement of aquatic and upslope reserves to provide for terrestrial and aquatic habitats (FEIS, sections 2.1.2 – 2.1.5, 2.1.7).

## **Reduce Hazardous Fuels**

I am confident my decision will reduce wildfire hazards to natural resources on National Forest System (NFS) lands and the at-risk communities of La Porte and American House. I believe this action will effectively achieve desired fire behavior, my highest priority considering the flammable forest conditions across National Forest System (NFS) lands in the wildland urban interface (WUI) and bearing in mind uncertain future environmental conditions such as those driven by climate change and increasing human expansion and uses (FEIS, section 1.4.1, 2.1.3 and 3.3).

My focus of concern is for the likelihood of human-caused ignitions, particularly during the hot, dry summer months when tourism and lakeside developed campground overnight and day use in and around La Porte and nearby Little Grass Valley Recreation Area peaks. It becomes very apparent upon review of fire records and local prevailing wind trend data that La Porte and American House are topographically positioned at the upper headwaters of Slate Creek, Spanish Ravine and Rabbit Creek, which act to funnel flame fronts upslope, with these communities directly in the fire's path. Selected Alternative D strategically positions fuels reduction treatments to fill in gaps between Bald Onion, South fork, Poverty Hill and La Porte defensible fuel profile zones (DFPZs) planned prior to September 30, 2012 under the *Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act* (HFQLG Act), surrounding La Porte, American House and isolated private property inholdings (FEIS, section 2.1.3).

I considered the outcome of fire behavior models (Fire Management Analyst (FMA) and the Fire and Fuel Extension (FFE) of the Forest Vegetation Simulator, demonstrating hand cutting ladder fuels, grapple or hand piling and prescribe burning will reduce surface fuels to less than 5 tons per acre of dead woody material less than 3 inches in diameter and increase canopy base heights up to 83 feet above the ground. This reduction in fuels and forest structure will effectively promote lower flame lengths (< 4 feet), along with decreasing the potential of spotting and long range ignitions. I find this an important advantage compared to no action as increased fire suppression production rates will more quickly contain wildfires, while increasing firefighter and public safety (FEIS, sections 3.3.8 and 3.3.9).

## **Promote Forest Health**

My decision will effectively modify tree densities, tree species composition and forest structure as a step toward restoring desired ecologically healthy forest conditions, resilient to drought, insects and pathogens that are also more resilient to wildfire disturbances (FEIS, section 1.4.2). Selected Alternative D will effectively establish uneven-aged, multistoried, healthy forest with less than 60 percent relative density for the next 20 years; featuring decaying snags, large down wood, and dominated by large fire-tolerant trees with crowns sufficiently spaced to limit the spread of crown fire and spread of insects and diseases. Stand densities will be generally lower, yet also variable. Mosaic forest canopy composed of gaps and clumps will promote the regeneration, growth and

development of ponderosa pine, sugar pine and black oak, with complex forest stand heterogeneity resilient to drought.

My review of climate change studies such as Battles et al. (2008) indicates warming trends may accelerate tree mortality as a result of fire, disease epidemics and insect outbreaks, and may potentially enable forest insects and disease to expand ranges or increase potential for widespread damage. I find Alternative D will alter homogenous, overcrowded forestlands to re-establish and sustain a diverse suite of tree and plant species and structural complexity (gaps and clumps).

Within the Valley Creek Special Interest Area (SIA) and spatially overlapping California spotted owl and Northern goshawk Protection Activity Center (PAC) and surrounding Home Range Core Areas (HRCAs), Selected Alternative D will not exceed 5 percent per year or 10 percent per decade and will be limited to prescribed burning to preserve key habitats for wildlife. Manual hand cutting of small trees and shrubs will be limited to within 250 feet either side of main road access routes through the Valley Creek SIA; retaining a minimum of 50 percent canopy cover. I believe my decision to apply strategic low-intensity treatments will aid to preserve late-successional old growth forest habitats, also recognized for their unique botanical and scenic values (FEIS, sections 2.1.4, 3.4.6 and 3.5.6).

## **Improve Watershed Health**

I find Selected Alternative D will directly and indirectly benefit watershed resources resultant of road reconstruction and obliteration treatments, strategically-placed to target priority near-stream road segments directly delivering sedimentation into stream channels. Historic records indicate large scale hydraulic mining on private lands, widespread logging and expansion of road systems occurred across all land ownerships, developed to support local economies. Today, road densities are considered high contributing to lower water quality, particularly in the Rabbit Creek watersheds (subwatersheds 5, 6, and 8) surrounding the community of LaPorte and in subwatersheds 11 and 15. Although private and federal commercial operations have since declined, cumulatively, legacy roads are still eroding and diverting natural runoff patterns threatening beneficial uses, aquatic habitats and species (FEIS, sections 3.6 and 3.7).

I recognize landscape scale restoration necessary to reverse cumulative watershed effects is constrained by multiple land ownerships and jurisdictions, as well as regulatory and financial resources. However, the best available science indicates only a small proportion of road segments within the project area road network generates most of the road-related increases in sediment yields. Since field observations and monitoring data indicates road sediment deliveries can be greatly decreased by improving road drainage to disconnect the pathways between the point source and the stream system, I conclude approved road obliteration, decommission and re-design will aid recovery of degraded watersheds to off-set some short term impacts of restoring and reducing risks to recovering watershed resources from wildfire (FEIS, sections 3.7.6).

I considered the Sugarloaf Project partially lies within subwatersheds impacted cumulatively by historic private and federal activities and that Selected Alternative D will increase the percent of Threshold of Concern (TOC) from 29 to 155 for the sixteen subwatershed analyzed, with subwatersheds 5, 6, and 8 being pushed over their TOC, subwatershed 11 at TOC and

subwatershed 15 increasing further in percent TOC. I find these short term increases in TOC under Selected Alternative D warranted and unavoidable, in light of wildfire threats to at-risk private property inholdings, proximity to the Little Grass Valley Developed Recreation Area and vulnerable recovering rare watershed features (FEIS, section 2.1.2.1, 2.1.3 and 3.3).

My review of the project record indicates Alternative D best responds to the relevant issue for cumulative watershed effects (CWE) compared to Alternatives B and C, by retaining 10–20 percent higher (50–60) forest canopy closure near streams, eliminating timber harvesting on slopes averaging 35+ percent slope more prone to erosion, establishing an Aquatic Reserve and upslope reserves (positioned on steep slopes) to lower risks of mass wasting, while avoiding 2.0 acre group selection (GS) treatments and limiting gaps to ¼ acre in size. It limits the intensity of treatments in Riparian Conservations Areas (RCAs) where unoccupied by R5 Forest Service Sensitive aquatic wildlife to mastication, hand thinning, hand piling and pile burning and prescribed burning and obliterating, decommissioning, redesigning and upgrading road drainage features (FEIS, section 2.1.2 and 2.1.7).

Selected Alternative D incorporates the Best Management Practices (BMP) Evaluation Program (USDA 2002), developed to reduce the risk to water quality degradation by assessing the implementation and effectiveness of BMPs. The objective of BMPs is to protect water related beneficial uses from nonpoint source containments (USDA 2000c). I find Selected Alternative D incorporates proper application of BMPs to minimize operational short-term increases in soil erosion, such as rilling, and sediment delivery to nearby streams. It is consistent with the recent Region 5 amendment to the Forest Service Handbook for water quality management, directing the Forest Service to strive toward achieving BMP effectiveness rates of 90 percent to 95 percent (USDA 2011b). The Region 5 amendment states that BMP monitoring frequency may be reduced for evaluation protocols that rate as at least 95 percent effective for 5 consecutive years. Additionally, the Handbook amendment states that the Forest Service will work with the California State Water Resource Control Board to revise and improve particular BMPs if effectiveness rates are less than 90 percent (FEIS, section 3.7 and Appendix A-6).

## **Contribute to Economic Stability**

My decision will afford \$585,515 in revenue from the sale of marketable (sawlog) timber outputs generated from fuels reduction and forest health operations. The potential employee income from an estimated 147 jobs associated with logging and mechanical shredding, hand cutting and pile burning may reach as high as \$6,322,505, and may increase, if market opportunities allow for cost effective removal and processing of biomass when in alignment with treatment phases; offsetting expenditures and promoting more job offerings (FEIS, sections 2.1.7 and 3.10.4).

The most substantial contributions from employment are expected to occur in Butte, Plumas, Lassen, Sierra, and Yuba Counties due to proximity to the Project area. Throughout northern California, cumulative years of reduced timber harvesting activities (including those on federal lands) have resulted in the loss of infrastructure (i.e., local mill closures) to complete such activities. During the period from 1990 to 2010, there has been 74 sawmill and 11 miscellaneous mill closures (Ehinger 2010). Loss of these infrastructures has already eliminated economic

opportunities to utilize forest biomass by-products from NFS lands to offset operational costs under Selected Alternative D. The continuation of current conditions would preclude and/or notably limit opportunities for long-term employment and rural community stability (FEIS, sections 2.1.7 and 3.10.4).

## Biological Resources

The rationale for my decision to select Alternative D is based on my review of Chapter 3 of the FEIS and the following analysis support documentation:

### Wildlife and Habitat

**Terrestrial.** My decision addresses the need to reduce excessive amounts of highly flammable fuels within and surrounding the federally-designated Valley Creek Special Interest Area (SIA) recognized for unique botanical and scenic values, and the spatially overlapping Protected Activity Center (PAC) and surrounding Home Range Core Areas (HRCAs). These at-risk key habitats, used by rare wildlife such as the California spotted owl and Northern goshawk, will not survive a catastrophic fire (FEIS, sections 3.5.5). Historic fire records indicate the last wildfire to occur in the Sugarloaf Project area, surrounding La Porte listed by the California Fire Alliance as a community at-risk, has not occurred for over 100 years. Nearly the entire 23,931 acre landscape is classified as being Condition Class 3 (FEIS, table **Error! Reference source not found.**), featuring vegetative composition, structure, and fuel conditions predisposed to high risk of loss of key ecosystem components (FEIS, sections 3.3.7 and 3.4.6).

Since my decision will have no effect to Endangered, Threatened or Proposed species as surveys have not located animals on the Feather River Ranger District, my conclusion is there would be no interrelated or interdependent actions to Endangered, Threatened or Proposed species (Endangered Species Act [ESA]) 50 CFR 402:02 (FEIS, section 3.3.5 and 3.6.5 and the Wildlife Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment (USDA 2012a).

The Wildlife Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment, Management Indicator Species Report and the Migratory Bird Report, indicating activities are designed so they do not jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered, proposed, candidate or Management Indicator Species (MIS), or that would lead to a trend toward listing or loss of viability of Forest Service Sensitive species (36 CFR 219). I am selecting Alternative D because mechanical thinning treatments are specifically designed to retain all suitable habitats for old-forest dependent species (i.e., no open forest canopy or early seral conditions created), it does not include Group Selection, and the analysis indicates activities as designed will have the least potential impact to Forest Service sensitive species compared Alternatives B and C. Under Alternative D, treatments within the Valley Creek Special Interest Area (SIA) and spatially overlapping NOGO and CSO PACs will not exceed 5 percent per year or 10 percent per decade, and will be limited to prescribed underburning and manual hand cutting of small trees and shrubs within 250 feet either side of main road access routes; retaining a minimum of 50 percent canopy cover.

***Aquatic/Riparian.*** I believe the Selected Alternative D provides the best strategy to protect sensitive aquatic and riparian rare resources by establishing an Aquatic Reserve around the known Sierra Nevada yellow legged frog populations, maintaining 50-60 percent forest canopies alongside streams to maintain riparian networks, while reducing risk of damaging impacts to natural resources from high intensity wildfire.

My review of the Aquatic Biological Evaluation (BE)(USDA 2014) indicates Foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*) and the Pacific pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) classified as Forest Service Sensitive and the Sierra Nevada (mountain) yellow legged frog (SNYLF), currently proposed for Federal listing by the USFWS under the Endangered Species Act (Fed. Reg. Vol. 68, No 11, 2283 2303), occupy the Sugarloaf Project area.

The SFNPA FSEIS and ROD (USDA 2004a, 2004b) allows for project level adjustments to the standard RCA widths described below, if a landscape analysis has been completed and a site-specific RCO analysis demonstrates a need for different widths. The IDT most recently updated the Slate-Canyon Rapid Landscape Assessment (USDA 2013), to determine if adjustments to RCA widths were warranted. The IDT findings indicate changes to standard RCA buffers are not necessary to achieve restoration goals. Therefore my decision maintains standard buffer widths (FEIS, section 2.1.7).

#### **Valley Creek Special Interest Area**

Special Interest Area (SIAs) are part of a national network of Forest Service lands designated to protect, and where appropriate foster public use and enjoyment of, areas with scenic, geological, botanical, zoological, paleontological, archeological, or other unique characteristics that merit special attention and management. The Valley Creek Special Interest Area (SIA) was established in 1989 to preserve a prime example of late-successional forest on the Plumas National Forest. I find Selected Alternative D is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines tied to the Valley Creek SIA designation in the Plumas NF LRMP under the Lost Creek Management Area (Area 13, p. 4-189) and the Minimum Management Prescription (Rx-7, p. 4-86).

My review of the Valley Creek SIA Management Strategy (USDA 2013) indicates this area contains important habitat for a number of old-growth dependent species, performs a complex suite of ecological services, and offers important inspirational and recreational opportunities to the public. Fire is an inevitable force in Sierra mixed conifer forests. In the face of continued fire exclusion, the probability of catastrophic fire poses one of the greatest threats to structurally complex, mature forests and their associated species. With this in mind, I believe my decision will (a) protect the area's unique botanical and scenic values; (b) maintain existing physical characteristics through low intensity management; and, (c) manage vegetation to perpetuate the old-growth characteristics.

My conclusion is Selected Alternative D will aid effective fire suppression in the event of a wildfire while avoiding potential conflicts between biological, scenic integrity and recreational use, in part by limiting hand thinning treatments to alongside roadways and phased, low intensity prescribed fire on a limited extent. My decision does not include any

Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class changes (FEIS; sections 1.7, 2.1.2 and 2.2.1).

### **Botanical**

I considered effects on botanical resources and noxious weeds as disclosed in the Plant Biological Assessment/Evaluation (BA/BE) including the analysis of Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Sensitive (TEPS) plant species, the Botany Report addressing Plumas National Forest Special Interest plant list (Watch List species), special habitats, and other botanical resources, and the Noxious Weed Risk Assessment presenting the assessment of noxious weeds and other invasive non-native plant species (FEIS, section 3.9).

Special-Status Species. Since Selected Alternative D will maintain and improve habitats for the Sensitive species *Lewisia kelloggii* ssp. *hutchisonii* and *Lupinus dalesiae*, *Botrychium crenulatum* and *Cypripedium fasciculatum* and habitats for the Special Interest species *Clarkia mildrediae* ssp. *lutescens* and *Viola tomentosa*. and potential negative effects are decreased through the use of Controlled Areas and project prescriptions, I find plants are likely to respond positively to project activities that thin the forest canopy (FEIS, section 3.9).

Noxious Weed Species. Since Selected Alternative D will establish Botany Controlled Areas (CAs) to isolate the two noxious weed sites within treatment areas, I find my decision will not increase the spread of noxious weed seeds or other propagules to other areas (FEIS; section 3.9).

### **Cultural Resources**

As the Responsible Official, I am dedicated to protecting historic properties in a spirit of stewardship for the inspiration and benefit of present and future generations (*National Historic Preservation Act* [NHPA] (16 USC 470-1(3))). Based upon my review of the project record indicating all eighty-seven sites potentially eligible under the National Register of Historic Places Criteria identified within the area of potential effect will be buffered from operational disturbances, I find my decision to Select Alternative D is consistent with the Region 5 Section 106 Compliance Programmatic Agreement (USDA 2013a). I believe there will be an immediate and foreseeable positive effect from lowering fuel loading around sites, as well as reducing the chances for high intensity wildfires FEIS, section 3.11).

### **Public Involvement**

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Involving the public in the decision-making process and incorporating comments has been crucial to the completion of this decision, and I believe strengthened the final design for the Sugarloaf Project. The Forest Service began working with the public on this Project almost two years ago. From the beginning, my intent was to include those who recreate on the Plumas National Forest lands, and to use that collective knowledge to ensure that the design of the Project also supported the enjoyment of the Plumas National Forest for local residents and visitors alike. The following



characterizes the types of public involvement efforts that we have used throughout this process (the entire record of public involvement is described in Section 1.7 of the FEIS):

**Scoping:** The NOI for the Sugarloaf Project was published in the Federal Register on Tuesday, June 5, 2012 (Vol. 77, No.108, pp. 33158-33159). On September 30, 2012, the 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act authorities to implement the *Herger Feinstein Quincy Library Group* (HFQLG) Act underlying the design of preferred Alternative B ended. For this reason, the Sugarloaf Project FEIS presents Alternative D as the preferred course of action emphasizing ecological restoration under the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Final Supplemental EIS (SFNPA FSEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

In addition, the Forest Service mailed letters inviting comment on the Sugarloaf Project to 5 Tribal Councils, potentially affected mining claimants (near or within proposed treatment areas), other government agencies, interest groups and 443 potentially affected citizens. An additional 33 emails were sent with invitation to comment letter attached. An informational packet was circulated during the Scoping period. A revised Scoping Packet was distributed on April 14, 2013 to update interested stakeholders of project modifications and shift in public notice and comment procedures.

On June 18, 2012, the Forest Service held an open house attended by three representatives from Sierra Pacific Industries, Herger Feinstein Quincy Library Group (HFQLG) Counties' Forester and several residents of La Porte. Concerns for operational economic feasibility of treating biomass along with recommendations were provided. Residents expressed concerns for impacts to scenic quality and risks associated with applying prescribed fire.

On June 27, 2012, the Director of the John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute accompanied Forest Service specialists on a field site visit to the Sugarloaf project area providing recommendations and information regarding incorporating concepts from the General Technical Reports PSW-GTR-220 and PSW-GTR-237, prepared by the USDA Pacific Southwest Research Station (March 2009 and 2012 respectively) to mechanical thinning prescriptions and strategically allow for moderate and high intensity prescribed fire; specific recommendations to promote Black-backed woodpecker habitat was shared. The Pacific Crest Trail Association, Northern Sierra Regional Representative requested information and submitted comments on July 3, 2012 to protect and preserve the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and surrounding scenic quality as internationally significant resources.

On July 20, 2012, a comment letter was received from the Lead Reviewer (R5) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) expressing concerns regarding cumulative water quality impacts from road construction, increased habitat fragmentation and the potential for noxious weed proliferation linked to the HFQLG Act; specifically DFPZ and Group Selection treatments proposed in the HFQLG could be non-sustainable practices that will result in the future degradation of natural resources, available timber products and the

overall economic welfare of the surrounding communities. EPA also provided recommendations for analysis and disclosure in the FEIS.

**Draft EIS Comment Period:** On July 26, 2013, the Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS (DEIS) for review was published in *Federal Register* (78 FR, No. 144, pp. 45190). The comment period ended September 9, 2013. Four comment letters were received during the comment period. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region IX, Environmental Review Office provided recommendations for more comprehensive disclosure about climate change and limited biomass energy capacity in the FEIS, along with a Lack of Objections rating. The USDI Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance commented a review was conducted, with no comments to offer. The John Muir Project (JMP) Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) provided comments including requests for more information about data underlying predictive fire behavior modeling, consideration for research suggesting Spotted Owl populations are declining, mixed-severity habitats used by Pacific fishers and detrimental trends to the Black-backed woodpecker as a result of fire suppression and post-fire salvage logging. Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) submitted comments supporting the Sugarloaf Project, specifically endorsing the tactical Alternative development strategy and the timber harvest extraction design. (FEIS, section 1.8 and Appendix A-9).

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## Alternatives Considered in Detail but Not Selected

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Alternative A (No action Alternative), Alternative B (designed to fulfill the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act (HFQLG Act)) and Alternative C (Fuels Reduction only) were considered in detail but not selected for reasons discussed below. A more detailed description of these Alternatives can be found in Chapter 2 of the Sugarloaf Project FEIS.

### Alternative A

It is important to note that the No-action Alternative provided a baseline for comparing the other Alternatives and other administrative activities such as road maintenance and other previously authorized projects will proceed. The environmental analysis and disclosure of the No-action Alternative provides an indication of what could happen if none the action Alternatives are implemented. Although under Alternative A, no hazardous fuels reduction, vegetative management or road improvements would occur at this time, the lack of action could result in discrete, indirect consequences, as described in Chapter 3 of the FEIS, briefly summarized below:

**Apply Hazardous Fuels Reduction treatments:** Defensible spaces would not be established; only removal of hazard trees along roadways would occur as prescribed by current management direction.

**Apply Forest Health treatments:** No activity proposed.

**Contribute forestry-related jobs and revenue:** No jobs or commercial forest by-products or revenue would be generated.

**Apply watershed health treatments:** No road improvements or decommissioning proposed.

*This Alternative was not chosen because it does not meet the purpose and need or the recommendations in the Sierra or Plumas Community Wildland Protection Plans. The No-action Alternative would not meet the purpose of modifying fire behavior to aid suppression, as it would not expedite the need to reduce potential flame length to 4 feet or less. Without prevention treatments, predicted flame lengths could reach 100 feet considered unsafe for direct attack with ground suppression fire fighter modules. Canopy base heights would be lower than the desired 15 feet supporting high intensity passive and active crown fires, placing the rural communities of La Porte and American House at continued risk from wildfire.*

*Conifers would continue to populate forest understories, on average, 309 square feet of basal area and a relative stand density of 68 percent, continuing a decline in tree vigor and loss of forest health and diversity. Stands and aggregations within stands that are currently overstocked would continue to experience mortality due to high levels of inter-tree competition. Alternative A would tend to maintain uniform structure and species composition in the White fir type at the landscape scale, without active forest management (FEIS, section 3.2.5). Under the No-action Alternative, wood and jobs would not be created and hydro-connectivity, rilling, and stream channel diversions on the identified National Forest System (NFS) roads would not be repaired or benefits to water quality foreseen.*

## **Alternative B**

Alternative B was selected as an additional Alternative, designed to test and demonstrate the effectiveness of the 1998 *Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act* (HFQLG Act) pilot fuels, vegetation and riparian restoration activities in meeting ecologic, economic, and fuel reduction objectives per the standards and guidelines in Table 2 in the 2004 SNFPA ROD). On September 30, 2012, the 2008 *Consolidated Appropriations Act* authorities to implement the HFQLG Act underlying the design of Alternative B and applicable standards and guidelines ended. For this reason, the selection of Alternative B would require a minor amendment to the Forest Plan. Alternative B is discussed in detail in FEIS section 2.1.8.

This Alternative incorporates road improvements, decommissioning and obliteration, while establishing defensible fuel profile zones (DFPZs) and Group Selection (GS) treatments under standards and guidelines in the 2004 ROD; Table 2, as follows.

1. **Apply Hazardous Fuels Reduction treatments:** DFPZs would establish defensible spaces over 992 acres by applying 763 acres of variable density thinning and 229 acres of thinning from below and a variety of mechanical and manual ladder and surface fuels treatments, including 3,919 acres of prescribed fire using manual ignition (i.e., drip torch) techniques
2. **Apply Forest Health treatments:** Group Selections up to 2.0 acres individually over a total 71 acres would be established.
3. **Apply watershed health treatments:** An estimated 20.3 miles of NFS road would be improved, decommissioned or obliterated to promote watershed health.

4. **Contribute forestry-related jobs and revenue:** Commercial forest by-products up to 5.8 million board feet of timber volume and 19,700 gross tons of biomass; contributing potentially 152 forestry-related jobs in Butte and Plumas Counties would be generated.

Wood by-products from these treatments are expected to produce 5.8 million board feet of commercially-valuable timber volume, requiring 4.9 miles of NFS classified road reconstruction, 4.3 miles of unclassified (temporary) road construction (closed post operations) and the construction of 31 new log landing sites.

*Alternative B was not selected because Alternative D reduced environmental impacts in comparison, while best balancing meeting the elements of the purpose and need. For example, Alternative B would implement 159 acres of hand thinning, while Alternative D would implement 1,037 acres, removing most trees up to 9 inches in diameter (FEIS, section 3.2.6). I find this allows for effective treatment of the most flammable vegetation, while maintaining forest canopy to preserve habitats and shield soils from erosive storm processes and increased sedimentation.*

*Choosing Alternative B would result in a deficit operation with an estimated net harvest cost and revenue of -\$211,236, compared to Alternative D, which will generate \$277,643 in revenues. I find Alternative B would be less economically efficient in reducing hazardous fuels conditions and achieving forest health objectives, inconsistent with the 1988 Plumas LRMP and the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Final Supplement Environmental Impact Statement (SNFPA FSEIS, 2004).(FEIS, sections 3.3 and 3.10).*

## **Alternative C**

Alternative C establishes fuel treatments for the sole purpose and need to modify fire behavior at a landscape scale. Similar to Alternatives B and D, this Alternative aims to affect fire behavior at a landscape scale; designed to apply more intensive mechanical area thinning treatments along ridge tops and adjacent to private development in La Porte, American House and surrounding dispersed private inholdings. Alternative C, identical to Alternative D, applies standard RCA buffer widths per SFNPA FSEIS and ROD (USDA 2004a, 2004b). This Alternative excludes all activities other than fuels reduction in the wildland urban interface (WUI) and does not respond to the forest or watershed health elements of the purpose and need, as follows:

1. **Apply Hazardous Fuels Reduction treatments:** Defensible space would be established over 1,315 acres of area thinning from below and a variety of mechanical and manual ladder and surface fuels treatments, including 3,643 acres of prescribed fire using manual ignition (i.e., drip torch) techniques.
2. **Apply Forest Health treatments:** No activity proposed; indirect benefits from fuels reduction.
3. **Apply watershed health treatments:** Approximately 5 miles of road would be redesigned and/or upgraded with drainage features to mitigate short term increases in sedimentation from operations.

4. **Contribute forestry-related jobs and revenue:** Commercial forest by-products up to 5.3 million board feet of timber volume and 19,700 gross tons of biomass; contributing potentially 186 forestry-related jobs in Sierra and Plumas Counties. Timber removal would require 3.5 miles of NFS classified road reconstruction, 2.8 miles of unclassified road construction (closed post operations) and the construction of 21 new landing sites.

*This Alternative was not chosen because it does not respond to the purpose and need to improve forest and watershed health. In addition, I find Alternative D a better selection, as both Alternatives effectively achieve fuels reduction objectives, but operations under Alternative C are estimated to be deficit with a net harvest cost and revenue of -\$468,879 (FEIS, section 3.10.4).*

## **Environmentally Preferred Alternative**

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As described in the section above, Selected Alternative D will best protect natural resources from the threat of wildfire, promote forest health and tree species diversity, best contributes to economic stability and the protection of water quality and riparian resources.

## **Legal and Regulatory Compliance**

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My decision complies with the laws, policies, and executive orders listed below and described in Chapter 3 of the Sugarloaf FEIS summarized below:

### **Forest Plan Consistency**

The Selected Alternative D is designed to be consistent with the amended Land and Resource Management Plan LRMP as it would not conflict with the management direction regarding applicable resource areas, as follows:

### **Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations**

The National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1502.25(a) directs “to the fullest extent possible, agencies shall prepare draft EIS concurrently with and integrated with ...other environmental review laws and executive orders.” Each resource section in the FEIS includes a list of applicable laws, regulations, policies and Executive Orders that are relevant to that resource. Surveys, analyses, and findings required by those laws are specifically addressed in Chapter 3 of the FEIS. These laws include:

**National Forest Management Act** - The Forest is in compliance with the National Forest Management Act as it pertains to the Sugarloaf Project. Projects that occur on National Forest System lands must meet minimum specific management requirements by designing the project to meet standards and guidelines of the Forest Plan and its amendments (FEIS, section 1.7). This project meets all applicable guidelines for land management plans according to 16 U.S.C. 1604 (g) (3)(FEIS, Appendix A-8).

**Indian Sacred Sites, Executive Order 13007 of May 24, 1996 – Section 1. Accommodation of Sacred Sites.** (a) In managing Federal lands, each executive branch agency with statutory or administrative responsibility for the management of Federal agency functions, (1) accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and (2) avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites. Where appropriate, agencies shall maintain the confidentiality of sacred sites (FEIS, section 3.11).

**National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as Amended** - The Forest Service is complying with the provisions of the National Historic Preservations Act of 1966 as amended as it pertains to the Sugarloaf Project. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has defined a Federal undertaking in 36 CFR 800.16(y) as a project, activity, or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a Federal agency, including those carried out by or on behalf of a Federal agency; those carried out with Federal financial assistance; those requiring a Federal permit, license or approval; and those subject to State or local regulation administered pursuant to a delegation or approval by a Federal agency (FEIS, section 3.11).

**2005 Travel Management Rule 36 CFR 212, Subpart B** - This project is designed to comply with the provisions of the 2005 Travel Management Rule 36 CFR 212, Subpart B to end cross-country travel and associated route proliferation, per the Plumas National Forests Public Motorized Travel Management, 2010 Record of Decision. The minor changes to the National Forest System road network falls within the scope of the environmental analysis and complies with the criteria in the rule and decision (FEIS, section 2.2.2).

**Clean Air Act** – The Forest Service is complying with provisions of the Clean Air Act as it pertains to the Sugarloaf Project. All burning will be completed under approved burn and smoke management plans. Burning permits will be acquired from the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District. The Air Quality Management District will determine dates when burning is allowed, The California Air Resources Board provides daily information on burning conditions. Burning will be implemented in a way to minimize particulate emissions (FEIS, section 3.12).

**Clean Water Act** – This decision complies with this law and it's implementing regulations and policies (FEIS; sections 3.7 [Hydrology] and 3.8 [Soils]).

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act - The section requires the identification of water bodies that do not meet, or are not expected to meet, water quality standards or are considered impaired. The list of affected water bodies, and associated pollutants or stressors, is provided by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The most current list available is the 2010 Integrated Report on the SWRCB website (SWRCB 2010). There are no 303d listed water bodies within the Sugarloaf Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project (FEIS, sections 3.7 and 3.8).

This Project includes mitigation to minimize impacts to water quality and soils based on best management practices. The Forest Service is complying with the provisions of the Clean Water Act as it pertains to the Sugarloaf Project (FEIS, section 3.7). Section 208 of the Clean Water Act requires States to prepare nonpoint source pollution plans that are to be certified by the State and

approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In response to this law, and in coordination with the State of California Water Quality Resources Control Board and EPA, the Forest Service, Region 5, began developing best management practices (BMPs) in 1975 for water quality management planning on National Forest System lands in California. This process identified the need to develop a BMP for addressing the cumulative off-site watershed effects of forest management activities on the beneficial use of water. The Sugarloaf Project meets this through the incorporation of project design features (FEIS, section 2.2 and Appendix A-6).

**Migratory Bird Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act** – This Project will not result in the take or harm to migratory birds, Bald Eagle or Golden Eagles. A complete assessment is provided in the BE/BA, located in the project record. (FEIS, section 3.5.5. and the Wildlife Supplemental Information Migratory Birds Report (USDA 2012c).

**Endangered Species Act** – This decision complies with this law. Biological Assessments for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species were prepared in accordance with legal requirements set forth under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (19 U.S.C. 1536 {c}), 50 CFR 402, and standards established in Forest Service Manual (FSM) direction (FSM 2672.42). Formal consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service and a biological opinion are not required to meet provisions of the Endangered Species Act (FEIS, section 3.6.5). A complete assessment is provided in the BE/BAs, located in the project record.

**Executive Order 13112 Invasive Species 64 FR 6183 (February 8, 1999)**. This project is designed to comply with this order. The project includes assessing the noxious weed risk and monitoring treatment areas identified as vulnerable to noxious weed infestations. Specific information on monitoring for noxious weeds is in FEIS; Appendix A-6. A complete assessment is provided in the BE/BA, located in the project record.

**National Historic Preservation Act** – This project was designed to meet this act by following Region 5's *Programmatic Agreement among the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Intermountain Region's Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, California State Historic Preservation Officer, and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Process for Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act on the National Forests in California* (2001) Specialized avoidance protection measures will be implemented to ensure that cultural resource values are protected (FEIS; section 3.11 and Appendix A-6).

**Special Area Designations** – I have determined that the Selected Alternative D complies with laws, regulations, and policies that pertain to the following special areas: Research Natural Areas, Inventoried Roadless Areas, Wilderness Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers, as the Sugarloaf Project area is not located within any of these special designations (FEIS; section 1.7). I find Selected Alternative D is consistent with the amended 1988 Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Standards and Guidelines for Special Interest Areas (SIAs), as treatments are limited in extent to hand thinning and prescribed burning and will not require the use of mechanical equipment (FEIS, Section 2.2.2).

## **Predecisional Administrative Review (Objection process)**

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The Sugarloaf Hazardous Fuels Reduction Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and draft Record of Decision (ROD) are available on the Plumas National Forest website:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/projects\\_and\\_plans/sugarloaf\\_hazardous\\_fuels\\_reduction\\_project/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/projects_and_plans/sugarloaf_hazardous_fuels_reduction_project/).

Upon request, copies can be obtained at the Feather River District Office, 875 Mitchell Avenue, Oroville, California 95965, or by contacting Carol Spinos at 530-532-8932.

This proposed decision is subject to objection pursuant to 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B. Objections will only be accepted from those who submitted project-specific written comments during scoping or other designated comment period. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted comments unless based on new information arising after the designated comment period(s).

Objections must be submitted within 45 days following the publication of this legal notice in the Feather River Bulletin. The date of this legal notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframes provided by any other source. It is the objector's responsibility to ensure evidence of timely receipt (36 CFR 218.9).

Objections must be submitted to the reviewing officer: Randy Moore, Regional Forester, USDA Forest Service; Attn: Sugarloaf; 1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592. Ph. (707) 562-8737. Objections may be submitted via mail, FAX (707-562-9229), or delivered during business hours (M-F 8:00am to 4:00pm). Electronic objections, in common (.doc, .pdf, .rtf, .txt) formats, may be submitted to: [objections-pacificsouthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:objections-pacificsouthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us) with Subject: Sugarloaf.

Objections must include (36 CFR 218.8(d)): 1) name, address and telephone; 2) signature or other verification of authorship; 3) identify a single lead objector when applicable; 4) project name, Responsible Official name and title, and name of affected National Forest(s) and/or Ranger District(s); 5) reasons for, and suggested remedies to resolve, your objections; and, 6) description of the connection between your objections and your prior comments. Incorporate documents by reference only as provided for per 36 CFR 218.8(b).

## **Implementation Date**

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If no objections are filed within the 45-day appeal period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the objection filing period. When objections are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last objection disposition.



## Contact Person

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The Sugarloaf Project draft Record of Decision, FEIS and supporting documents are available for public review at the Feather River Ranger District Office, 875 Mitchell Avenue, Oroville, CA 95965-4646. For further information on this decision, please contact Carol Spinos (cspinos@fs.fed.us), Senior NEPA Planner, at (530) 532-8932.

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*EARL W. FORD*  
*Forest Supervisor, Plumas National Forest*  
*Quincy, CA*

*Date*



## **Appendix A: Public Objections and Responses**